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Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, in Paris, continues to coordinate intensive diplomatic efforts to give new momentum to negotiations for peaceful settlement to conflict in former Yugoslavia.

+ Special Representative Akashi to visit Sarajevo and Pale tomorrow, to pursue cease-fire efforts; UNPROFOR Commander Rose discusses detention of United Nations military personnel with Bosnian Serbs.

+ Secretary-General issues "call to arms" in the battle against AIDS; notes serious shortcomings in efforts so far; says "planetary emergency" demands coordinated global action and new social response.

+ United States Surgeon-General Joycelyn Elders addresses World AIDS Day panel at United Nations Headquarters; challenges world leaders to devote resources to research, treatment and education.

+ Economic and Financial Committee approves eight draft resolutions including ones on Human Development Report, multilateral trade; industrial development and anti-malaria activities.

+ Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee told women's unacceptably low level of participation in decision-making process calls into question basic principles of democracy.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was in Paris today, where he continued to follow closely and with great concern, the situation in the former Yugoslavia. He sent Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to Brussels, to brief Willy Claes, the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on yesterday's discussions in Sarajevo. Mr. Goulding will report to the Secretary-General tonight on his meeting which was held in the framework of the coordination between the United Nations and NATO. Earlier today, the Secretary-General addressed the AIDS summit meeting.

Tomorrow, the Secretary-General will travel to Geneva, from where he will continue intensive diplomatic efforts to give new momentum to negotiations for a peaceful settlement to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, specifically a cease-fire in Bosnia and especially in Bihac. He will be in contact with

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Special Representative Yasushi Akashi and Thorvald Stoltenberg, co-chairman of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia, who will participate in the Ministerial Contact Group's meeting on Bosnia in Brussels tomorrow. The Secretary-General is scheduled to address Monday's opening in Budapest of the Meeting of the Heads of States or Government Conference on the Security and Cooperation in Europe.

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Special Representative Yashushi Akashi will travel to Sarajevo and Pale tomorrow, at the Secretary-General's request, to pursue efforts for a cease-fire agreement between the parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A spokesman for the Organization said the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) commander in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Michael Rose, was already in Pale talking to the Bosnian Serbs about the cease-fire proposal delivered to them last Sunday. He also held discussions on the detention of over 450 UNPROFOR personnel.

Meanwhile, there was an unusual military development near the Bosnian border yesterday, when a fire fight broke out between Croatian military forces and Croatian Serbs across the zone of separation, the spokesman said. In Sarjevo, there were further reports of Sagger missiles hitting the Interior Ministry in the center of town.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today issued a "call to arms" in the battle against the AIDS epidemic. In his opening address to the AIDS Summit meeting in Paris, the Secretary-General said he was not issuing a warning, but declaring a "planetary emergency". Despite the considerable resources committed to the fight against the epidemic over the years, there had been serious shortcomings in the international community's action. Often, there was no linkage between global strategies and national efforts, and action was hampered by conflicting technical considerations and competition.

The Secretary-General said the way forward was to simultaneously encourage medical research, improve the coordination of international action and offer a new social response. Improving international coordination against AIDS meant taking a firmer stand on ethical principles and respect for fundamental rights, particularly those of women, on the voluntary nature of testing and on the participation of non-governmental organizations in the decision-making process.

Stressing that the fight against AIDS also involved a cultural challenge, the Secretary-General said information and education were essential to a genuine AIDS-prevention policy, yet discussion was often impeded by cultural, religious, ideological and social barriers. The United Nations, States and non-governmental organizations must contribute to changing people's attitudes, which meant adapting information to different cultural contexts, to various social milieus and to different generations.

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World leaders must continue to devote resources to research, treatment and education to defeat the AIDS epidemic, Joycelyn Elders, Surgeon General of the United States told a World AIDS Day panel at United Nations Headquarters today. She said leaders must also continue to remind their people that the disease could be thwarted through education, caring and hope.

Dr. Elders challenged communities everywhere to recognize that government alone could not defeat HIV/AIDS. She also challenged families to recognize that the disease gave everyone the opportunity to show unconditional love, to defeat fears and prejudices, to care for those who were suffering and give hope to those who did not see a future.

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The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) today approved eight draft resolutions, including one by which the General Assembly would affirm that the annual publication, Human Development Report, was a separate and distinct exercise not an official United Nations document. The Assembly would welcome the decision of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to improve the publication's quality and accuracy.

By another draft, the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to report at the fifty-first session in 1996 on institutional developments to strengthen international organizations in the area of multilateral trade. The Committee also approved a draft by which the Assembly would request the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to formulate measures to improve the industrial sector in Africa in light of the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) would be invited to assist with preventive action against malaria and to elaborate a plan of action on all related activities in that field, under the terms of another draft resolution approved by the Committee.

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Women's level of participation in decision-making, and power-sharing between men and women was still unacceptably low, Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women said today. She told the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) that the situation called into question the basic principles of democracy. The programme of action expected to be enacted at the World Conference on Women in Beijing next September would have empty results if there was no commitment to implement it.

The Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Noeleen Heyzer, said the "feminization of poverty" had become a global phenomenon with women making up at least 60 per cent of the world's 1 billion rural poor. Displaced women were caught in a double-bind of being exposed to new vulnerabilities, while still having to fulfil their responsibilities as care-givers. Conflicts had a particular impact on women who suffered from rape. During war there was no victory for them no matter which side won, she added.

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